

TRAIL MANAGEMENT

Management Guidelines

A. NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY TRAILS

Local trails that are not of regional or statewide significance will be identified and protected through management plans or disposal design under guidelines recommended in DNR's subdivision design manual. Once identified, trails will be recorded on the state's land record system and reserved through issuance of a trail permit. The following criteria should be used to determine whether a local trail should be protected by easement or public ownership:

- 1. Neighborhood Collector Trails.** If the local trail serves as a neighborhood collector trail that connects to a public open space system or regional or statewide trail, it will be kept in public ownership.
- 2. Use by Neighborhood Residents.** If the trail will be used almost entirely by neighborhood residents for their own use, it should be kept in state ownership or dedicated to the local government.
- 3. Local Pedestrian Access.** If the objective is to provide local pedestrian access, and the trail lacks the characteristics of the criterion described in the two paragraphs above, an easement may be used. This would typically occur when the purpose is to establish access between two lots, to improve pedestrian circulation within a subdivision where a greenbelt and neighborhood trail system does not provide adequate access, or where it is impractical to establish such an integrated trail system.
- 4. Buffers and Easements.** In cases of land offerings other than subdivisions (for example, land opened to homesteading), a publicly owned buffer or an easement will be used to protect designated trails.

B. STANDARD TRAILS OF REGIONAL OR STATEWIDE SIGNIFICANCE

These trails are generally travelled by foot, dogsled, horse and sometimes vehicles for a variety of purposes. Most standard trails have a history of public use and can be expected to see increased use as the state's population increases. The guidelines which follow are intended to insure consistent management practices on such trails management decisions on site specific conditions.

C. IDENTIFICATION OF TRAILS

Before public lands are leased or disposed of, trails that merit consideration for protection by one of the methods described above should be identified. The Division of Land and Water Management will be the lead agency for identification of trails and will consult with the other divisions of DNR, DOT/PF, ADF&G, affected private land owners, and local government when identifying trails. In addition, any agency, organization, or individual may identify public trails to be considered for protection.

D. TRAIL BUFFER WIDTH

Trails of regional or statewide significance on state land shall be protected by a publicly owned buffer that has a minimum width of 100 feet (50 feet each side of center line). This buffer should be sized to protect the quality of the experience of the user and to minimize negative effects such as noise or dust from adjacent land uses. Buffer widths may be increased to minimize land use and ownership conflicts, to protect the privacy of adjacent landowners, to separate motorized from non-motorized uses, to allow future siting of public facilities, to allow flexibility for rerouting, or to adapt a trail to specific public uses or aesthetic or environmental concerns.

Buffer widths may vary along the length of a trail because of the above considerations. The width of a buffer on any portion of a trail should also be based on the management intent for adjacent public land as expressed through applicable land use plans. However, the minimum width of the buffer will be 100 feet (50 feet either side of centerline). Trail buffers should be located and designed in consultation with affected divisions of DNR, ADF&G, and DOT/PF, affected private land owners, and appropriate user groups. Activity areas of 10 to 40 acres may be identified along trails for other uses such as camping or rest areas.

E. LAND USE IN PUBLICLY OWNED BUFFERS

To maintain the aesthetic character, trail buffers will be managed to maintain the natural vegetation within the buffer. Where the aesthetic character of the trail buffer will not be affected, timber sales, materials sales, and permits and leases for other activities may be allowed. This guideline does not preclude trail crossings or rerouting of trails as described below.

F. REROUTING TRAILS

Rerouting of trails may be permitted to minimize land use conflicts or to facilitate use of a trail if alternate routes provide opportunities similar to the original. If trails are rerouted, provision should be made for construction of new trail segments if warranted by type of use. Rerouting trails should be done in consultation with affected divisions of DNR, DOT/PF, ADF&G, private landowners, and appropriate user groups. Historic trails which follow well-established routes should not be rerouted unless necessary to maintain trail use.

G. TRAIL CROSSINGS

When it is necessary for powerlines, pipelines or roads to cross trail buffers, crossings should be at a 90-degree angle to the buffer when feasible. Vegetative screening should be preserved at trail crossings.

H. OTHER GUIDELINES AFFECTING TRAIL MANAGEMENT

Other guidelines will affect trail management. See in particular the following sections of this chapter.

- Cultural Resources
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Harvest Areas
- Forestry
- Materials
- Recreation, Tourism, and Scenic Resources
- Settlement
- Subsurface Resources
- Transportation and Utilities